1. {Whole No. 125} *Price, 10 Cents. Per Annum, $3.00.* Vol. V.

Indexed.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1871.

Subject: A Plea for Good Works.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

New-York:
J. B. FORD & CO., No. 39 PARK ROW.
1871.

AMERICAN NEWS COMPANY, AGENTS FOR THE TRADE.
European Agents, SAMPSON LOW, SON, & MARSTON, Crown Buildings, 188 Fleet Street, Lon
Sold by all Carriers and News Dealers.

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Brooklyn, January, 1869.

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A PLEA FOR GOOD WORKS.

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

"And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."—TITUS iii., 8, 14.

In the epistle of Paul to Titus, and in his two epistles to Timothy, we have not only the general expression of his teaching, but an indication of his idea of the mode in which a minister should administer the truth—of the subjects that he should discuss, and of the methods by which he should present the truth in connection with those subjects. There is therefore in these epistles a practical element which we scarcely shall find in any other of the apostle's writings. For when he teaches teachers how to teach, he gives a certain insight which he would not if he were teaching the congregation itself.

We find that when the apostle is writing to teachers, he puts great emphasis on the subject of *Good Works*. We find more said about good works in the New Testament than we hear said about them in the pulpit. I see, on every side, men afraid to teach morality, as being too superficial and too shallow. And others are afraid to preach too much good works because it will lead men away from the doctrine of "justification by faith." And others are afraid to teach good works because it will lead men to build their foundations not solid enough nor deep enough. But I hear the apostle saying to those who are ordained as teachers and overseers:

"I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. Let ours [that is, our disciples] learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."

This is not an accidental passage. If you turn to the first epistle to Timothy, aside from scattered passages all through the epistle, you find one in the fifth chapter, where the apostle, speaking of what a deaconness' qualifications ought to be, says,

"Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work."

SUNDAY MORNING, Jan. 29, 1871. LESSON: ROM. XII. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 104, 173, 622.

That shows the kind of good works that is meant. Working kindness and beneficence and equity in every direction—that is the good works which the apostle sought to inculcate.

Then we find in the sixth chapter of this same epistle, the injunction,

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

This does not mean that good works have a meritorious element in them, though it looks very much as if it did mean so.

So in the 2d of Timothy the apostle gives his idea comprehensively of what the benefit of the whole Scripture is:

"Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [that is to say, for teaching: it is the basis of teaching], for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

That is the drift of the whole of it. There is hardly a letter of Paul that does not put emphasis upon good works. Nor are we left in doubt of what he means by the term. As interpreted by the apostle, or as the term is used by the apostle, *good works* signifies, to give it a modern phraseology, *right feelings breaking out into right actions.* Good works are the outward expression of good feelings, whatever may be that expression. They are those means by which a thought or a feeling of truth, of equity, or of kindness, in us, takes on an outward form, so that it may do something for us. Such are the good works that the apostle meant. And of course you cannot classify them. They are endless. They are almost as various as the possibilities of combination in thought and feeling. They are evidently discriminated from mere feeling; that is, they are called "the fruit of the Spirit," "goodliness," etc. When the apostle designs to speak of interior states—love, joy, peace, hope, faith—he has particular terminology for them. When he wishes to speak of what the results of these states is in outward life, then he calls them "good works." So that these are the right affections of a man's nature taking on an outward expression. And that answers to the apostolic injunction that we are to be *rich in good works.*

Hence, there is not simply a continual specification throughout the whole drift of the New Testament, of the general productiveness of Christian life, but there is a special delineation of the duties which flow from men's relations to each other.

You shall find the New Testament giving hints to magistrates of their duties, to subjects of their duties, to masters of what good

works are to them, to slaves of what is expected of them, to husbands, to wives, to children, to the rich, to the poor, to strangers, to persons in sorrow, to persons in joy. Almost every civil or social situation, almost every condition in life, has some point or other instanced and drawn out as a specimen of what right action is to be in men if they are acting Christianly.

And this always made it seem very strange to me that people objected to preaching anything but what they call "the Gospel." For you recollect the time when if a man stepped out of the old doctrinal ring, and preached anything practical, everybody shut him up again, and said, "Go back and preach the Gospel"! And by *the Gospel* they meant those dead and alive intellectual statements that had no particular relation to vital feelings, or motive, or conduct—especially conduct in public affairs. But when you come to read the apostle's letters, you will find that they are full of allusions to practical life—to store life, to business life, to magisterial life, to the life of the king and of the subject, to the life of the citizen under all circumstances. All the relations of social life are brought out into view, and the Gospel is applied especially to them.

Now, I do not think that the preaching of the evangelical churches, even yet, attaches the same importance to good works that is given to them in the New Testament; and there are, and have been, not a few causes which have conspired to make us barren in that direction.

1. There is in Scripture itself a caution on the subject of good works. Men are dissuaded from trusting in them. And there is language which to those who read it incautiously and superficially seems to state that good works are of no value. But then, they are not the good works which we have been speaking of. There was a set of legal routine observances which went by the name of *works.* Generally these were called *works of righteousness;* or, more frequently, *works of the law.* And the impression of the old Jew was that although it would be better to have right affections, nevertheless one fulfilled every point and particular of the law by punctilious or outward performance. That he thought would be taken in lieu of every thing else. He made right living to consist in mere externality: not in character, not in disposition, not in motive; but simply in ritualistic performance. That was a corrupt, degenerate form of belief which existed in the time of Christ and the apostles; and against this Paul argued vehemently. In reference to this, he said that works were nothing; that they had no validity before God; that there was no reliance to be placed upon them; that one was as safe without them as with them; that if a man wanted them he was at liberty

to take them, and if he chose to leave them off he was at liberty to do that; that they were not to be trusted in; that they were without meritoriousness; that instrumentally they were good for what they did, and not a whit more. But this denunciation of good works as a ground of merit from the Jewish point of view, has been confounded with the exhortation to good works in the sense in which we have explained them; namely, as the outward expression of benevolent feelings.

2. Another influence which has dissuaded ministers from preaching God's good works has been the Catholic doctrine of good works as having an atoning virtue, which originally sprung up under the old Pharisaic doctrine, and was the outgrowth of it.

When the reformers emancipated the truth, they found men performing useless and senseless things innumerable,—superstitiously, vaguely believing that there was merit, and a certain moral purchasing power in given lines of conduct. Thus, when men gave gifts or performed charities, that was to be set down to them as a positive gain—as so much over against wrong-doing. For, so ignorant were men then (and they still are not much better enlightened), that they supposed the transactions of a man's heart could be likened to the transactions of a man's store; and that in matters of good and evil an account could be kept of debit and credit, one over against the other. It was taught that if a man performed good deeds they were of various values. For so many prayers, so many alms, so so many dollars, so much value in gifts, there was set down to their credit so much. If they performed penances, and endured mortifications, these inured to their benefit so and so. If they performed pilgrimages and fastings, these wrought so much for them. If they repeated the *Credo*, the *Ave*, or the *Pater Noster*, that availed them so much.

Now, I am not one of those who say that repeating the sacred Creed, or performing pilgrimages, and fastings, and penances, and mortifications, or bestowing gifts and charities, is all useless. On the contrary, if I see a man who by repeating his *Credo*, or his *Ave*, or his *Pater Noster* is made more devout, I say, "That does him good in the proportion in which it makes him more devout." If a proud man performs penances and mortifications, and it humbles him, I say, "It does him good so far as it humbles him." These things are instruments; and if they work out any good in a man, they are valuable for just that, but for nothing else. They are schoolmasters; and they are good if they teach man, who is their pupil. But in the time of the reformers it was thought that there was intrinsic merit in them, independent of what they did for a

man; and the church was found swarming with false notions of good works—with ecclesiastical impositions that went by the name of *good works*. And these reformers lifted up their voices, and said, "It is the heart that avails. It is the disposition before God that is taken into account. If a man is just, and pure, and true, and penitent, and humble, and loving, God accepts him on account of the moral nature which he finds or plants in him, and not on account of the external works which he performs." And so they denounced works, and said, "Ye are justified by faith"—that is, "Ye are to be saved by faith." There was a Catholic doctrine of justification by faith; but it was not one which would meet our modern needs. As I understand it, a man is justified before God on this ground,—that God's heart and disposition is such that they have in them healing power, so that when man's nature is brought into willing, voluntary, and continuous sympathy with them, they cleanse him. The divine nature cleanses ours. We are justified by our faith—that faith which brings us into commerce with God. We are purified, and cleansed, and ennobled by contact with divinity. That is justification by faith. And while the Roman priest was saying, "Ye are justified by your meritorious works: give, give, give; do, do, do," the reformer came, saying, "Ye are justified by no outward works: ye are justified by the merit and inward virtue of the heart of God." And the reformer was right. And in that Catholic sense good works were invalid and useless.

But such was the horror of everything Roman Catholic, that the prejudice against good works has come down to our time, and does not stop to discriminate as to what sort of works are meant. Every thing called *good works* is messed in a common lump, and is supposed to be uncongenial to the truth, and disallowed by the word of God.

3. Still another cause of reluctance there was, which discouraged much discourse on the subject of good works; namely, a very laudable desire, even when not symmetrical in knowledge, to counteract the shallow notions prevalent in society, as to the sufficiency of morality instead of true religion. For men have held substantially that if one obeys the laws of his land, and obeys the ordinary maxims of morality in his neighborhood, although that might not be very much, yet it was sufficient; that God would accept that in lieu of anything further—in lieu of any mysterious change. So the most superficial notion of morality—that of paying debts, of paying taxes, of maintaining outward proprieties—was made to be the basis of character. It was a miserable idea of character which prevailed. It had no inspiration in it, and never could have. It kept

men at a low point of development. And so it was false and unbecoming at every point.

Even the philosophers' idea of manhood left out the whole question of the state of the heart. It left out the whole moral question of man's life. It would permit pride and selfishness. It would permit envy, and jealousy, and even malice. It would permit all that goes to degrade a man inwardly, provided that outwardly he maintained an ordinary degree of morality.

As against this, men have preached that the outward life was not enough; that there must be something more than morality, as collateral to or independent of some other thing; that character must be higher and nobler than any external elements can make it; that there must be some deeper views, and therefore views more full of inward and spiritual life, prevailing. In communities where morality had depressed the religious notions of the community, and false and superficial morality had gained a footing, there sprung up preachers who gave the most intense and continuous views of the need of an inward life, and perhaps leaned to the other extreme.

4. One other influence I will mention, which has acted very strongly; namely, the tendency of men who reject the so-called evangelical scheme of doctrine, and substitute, (and with not much strength,) refinement, sentiment, taste, imagination, beauty, for what are called *strong doctrines.* This has set a large part of the pulpit very much against the preaching of good works. For it is true that a large class of thoughtful and excellent men—men excellent in themselves—fell off from what was considered the hard, evangelical, intellectual dogmas; and it is true that instead of raising up a superstructure of strong intellectual views, they rather fell into a strain of sentimentalism. And I think it is true that their preaching became, on the whole, feeble. Though at times it was full of sentiment and beauty, and always illumined by good taste, yet, after all, it lacked growth, and lost power. The preaching of mere sentiment will perhaps comfort those who already are refined; it will perhaps polish enamel that is already smooth; but such preaching never did, and I think never will, get hold of the community much. There is nothing in refinement and taste and good neighborhood that, being alone preached, or mainly preached, gets any hold upon the conscience, or gets any hold upon fear, or produces much reformation among wicked men. On the contrary, these things being preached exclusively, gradually deliquesce and run out. There is no power in them. There is no growth to them.

Thus, where the preaching of morality sprang up in modern times, it so happened that it sprang up in the hands of men who re-

jected, or, at any rate, neglected, the great outline truths of Christianity; and a certain contempt was therefore felt for it when it was preached by such persons.

All these reasons, you see, are quite aside from the truth itself; quite aside from any philosophic and interior reasons. They are external reasons founded on actions and reactions which have dissuaded men from preaching as much about good works as the Bible itself does.

There has sprung up, practically, indeed, in the evangelical churches, a high estimate of the moralities of life, and of good deeds in life. Doctrinally, however, they have been very little insisted upon. It has been taught, indeed, that if men were well rooted in doctrine, or doctrines, this would tend to produce good works; and that the most complete and summary method of reaching good works was to imbue men with doctrines of grace, so that when profoundly moved they would give forth those doctrines to the world. And there was some truth in it. For morality, according to high definition, is grace working out into a noble life-form. And yet, in many instances, and sometimes in whole denominations, dry doctrinal discussions have gone on until, little by little, the civilities of life, the thousand courtesies of life, all the moralities of life, have been undervalued; have been put into a separate classification of what are called "natural virtues." So that there were *gracious* states, and *natural* states; and the natural states were supposed to have no theological virtue in them.

I remember very well, in my youth, when the discussion waxed high between my father and me, turning on some such question as this: A man is walking by the side of the river. He hears some one cry out. It is a stranger. The river is full of floating ice. The man, moved by the impulse of generosity, springs from his horse, and plunges in. He struggles to save the drowning man at the peril of his own life, and will not give him up, and at last succeeds in bringing him to shore. And not content with simply saving his life, he takes him home, and administers to his wants, and sees that he is made dry and warm and comfortable. "Now," said I, "father, was it a good or a bad act in that man to risk his own life to rescue a fellow man from drowning? Was it acceptable to God, or was it not?" "There was no virtue in it," said father; "it was a mere nat'ral impulse—a mere nat'ral impulse." "Well," said I, "suppose such nat'ral impulses were spread all through a man, what would be the difference between nat'ral impulses and grace?"

There prevailed, arising from this classification, the notion that a man should perform the lines of conduct which sprang from direct

theological doctrine. Those, it was thought, would be gracious actions, and actions acceptable before God. But all those spontaneous good feelings that a man observes—all generosities, all kindnesses, all obliging dispositions, all tenderness, all sympathy, all equity, all truth, all magnanimity, such as we see irradiating life, such as smooth and enrich it—these, it was thought, are not bad (it never was taught that they were bad); but they have nothing of piety in them, they have not the peculiar quality which comes from the regenerating process, it was said.

Now, I affirm that they have. I affirm that they are right in so far as they are good. It is not a question of whether they amount to this,—that they are a satisfaction for wrong-doing. They are not. It is a question of whether a man may not do a great many incidental good things, and yet the great current of his life be proud and selfish. He may. It is a question of whether a man may not be a proud man, an avaricious man, a base man, a very worldly man, and yet have loop-holes of experience through which will shine much that is good and noble and true. It is a question of whether a man may not have actions cropping out here and there which are not in accordance with the general drift of his life.

Here is a man the button of whose pocket is as strong as decrees; and nothing can tear it open. He goes on from day to day seeing want on every side, and steeling his heart against it, and holding himself aloof from it. And yet, there comes an accidental day on which that button gives way, and the pocket flies open, and out comes his hand, doing a real good deed, which saves a man. Now, was not that a good deed? What if it was done by a man who was stingy yesterday, and that will make up for his generosity to-day by fleecing the first man that he makes a bargain with to-morrow, was not that a good thing for him to do? It was. And he ought to repeat it again and again and again, till it is the rule, and not the exception, in his conduct. The trouble is, not that we have too much of good works in life, but that we have too little of them. What is needed is, that they shall enter into the nature of character, and become habit. They are in and of themselves right. You cannot express a true word; you cannot perform a generous action; you cannot show a magnanimity, you cannot do a kind thing in the world, that God does not look upon it and say, "It is good."

But still, do not say that your character is good because you have accidentally performed one good deed.

Among the marksmen standing thick around, there comes a stranger who is bantered, to make a trial of the rifle; and taking aim and drawing the trigger, the first shot strikes the bull's-eye. But he will

not shoot again. He might shoot fifty times and not hit the mark. And that one lucky shot does not make him a skillful marksman, does it?

If, then, a man does a good act, it *is* a good act, even though his character is not good. He may not be, in general, a good man; but that particular thing is good. And the reason why he is not a good man is, that there is no continuity to his good deeds; there is no motive-power inside of his disposition to make it continuous. What we mean by good men is, not men who now and then do a good act, but men who join one good act to another. It is men the whole tendency of whose life is the production of good things, kind things, right things.

And the reason why I say that a moralist is in a dangerous state, is not in a salvable condition, is, not that single things are not right and good, but that single things do not make character; that single things do not make disposition; and that it is character and disposition that make manhood. And if in the general tenor of a man's life he is selfish, and proud, and sordid, and worldly, he is selfish and proud and sordid and worldly in spite of any incidental good things that he may do.

All feelings, I remark, first, social and moral, tend to some expression in conduct. Men are benefited if their feelings have this expression allowed them. Unfruitful emotion is to be suspected. Where unfruitful emotion is continuous, we may be sure that it performs nothing. Feeling acts as an impulse, as a spur, as a spring. It is that which puts a man forward in a certain course. And when feelings are excited, and they put nothing forward, they are sometimes even dangerous to a man. Even if they be not dangerous, they are incomplete, as emotions. For a perfect feeling is one which, rising from normal persuasion, eventuates in some form of action; in some form of incarnation; in some deed performed. Even if they are not spurious, unfruitful feelings are likely to become morbid, irregular, mischievous. Action is the right outlet of emotion.

The law of self-culture, therefore, requires good works, as the very way of having good feelings. I do not believe that a man can ever have good feelings which do him good permanently, unless they are feelings which take on some outward shape.

Now and then you go to meeting. You feel good all day Sunday; you feel happy, you feel like singing. But you do not pluck up one single fault by the roots. You do not weed out one wrong tendency. You do not act any more divinely toward man, woman, or child. You do not change your business. You do not illuminate

one dark place. You go to church; and what with singing and preaching and fellowship of society, you feel, as you say, *greatly refreshed;* you feel *greatly comforted and lifted up.* Having gone to church in the morning, you go again in the evening, and get a surfeit of feeling. And you go on Friday night again. And you would go on Wednesday night again. And you would go on Monday and Tuesday nights. Now what is the result, but that there is a constant excitation of feeling? And it is right feeling. It is devout feeling; it is friendly feeling; it is social feeling; and in its nature it is all right enough. But this is the point: it is the most dangerous thing a person can do to have a continuous flow of feeling that does not expend itself in some form of action. It produces morbidity, unfruitfulness of feeling, irregularity of feeling.

Therefore, in proportion as men go to meeting, they must be saints out of meeting. It will not do to be saints in meeting and sinners everywhere else. If you go where your feelings are kindled, where your emotions are raised to an ecstatic condition, you are in a dangerous situation. That is a state in which persons are liable to fall into a kind of crystaline mood, in which there is an immense deal of self-deception. And from this you will understand the difference between religion and religiousness, or religiosity. There is nothing more dangerous than intensity of feeling, and paucity of conduct as the result of that feeling; and just in proportion to the moral emotion excited, must be the moral conduct flowing therefrom. Every feeling ought to ultimate in some action, or course of action. We are to change, we are to incarnate these emotional states into physical triumphs, or they will not be wholesome.

I think there is a great deal too much going to meeting, therefore. If we could distribute going to church so that those who do not go at all should go some, and so that those that go too much should go less, and act more; if we could make a general average so that everybody should go as often as would be profitable, it would be far better than it is now. And if those who feel a great deal, felt less and did more, seeing to it that every feeling, like a flail, should come down and bring out some wheat on the great threshing floor of life, we all should be more benefited. Let good works spring from good feelings; and be alarmed when you have a great deal of good feeling and but little of good works.

Good works, I remark secondly, as the proper exponent of good feelings, are the most powerful persuasion to faith and to religion. There are a thousand who can understand a good action where there is one who can understand an abstract doctrine.

Now, I am far from saying that religion is not to have its philosophy, and that philosophy is not to be preached; but I affirm that while to indoctrinate a congregation in philosophy is important, it is not so important as to indoctrinate that congregation in the practicalness of good living. And if in preaching there was a larger interpretation of men's nature to themselves; if their faculties were better delineated to them; if the temptations to which they are liable were oftener pointed out to them, and the mode of fortifying themselves against those temptations were made more plain to them; if the exigencies into which their feelings are sure to be brought were more fully explained to them, and the ways of extricating themselves therefrom were more faithfully expounded to them, I think the results throughout the community would be much more satisfactory than those which flow from what is called *theological instruction.*

As I have said, doctrinal preaching does not influence men so strongly as the sight of good actions. A good doctrine will excite a man's judgment, and take hold of his conscience; but there is something more powerful than a good doctrine. It is a *good life.* Christ understood that, in theory and in practice. He headed, and then taught. He led before he preached. He acted first, and then he instructed. More than that, he laid down this maxim of conduct:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

It was a sight of men's kindness, and generosity, and justice, and patience, and fortitude that was to teach the Gospel to primitive ages. It was that which made it a power of life among God's children. Examples of this thing are constantly before us. Everybody has his *bete noir;* and Christians have theirs. We are brought up to hate the devil; and *devil* is the name for whatever we do hate. And while we have our little devils at home, and in business, and in the street, and elsewhere, we have also our little Christian devils; and those are other denominations. We are always taught, therefore, first to love our church, secondly to love God, and thirdly to hate all other churches. I do not say that that is the actual creed; but I say that to a large extent it is the way things go. People express themselves strongly. They thank God that they were *born in this church.* They thank God that they were *always brought up in this church.* And, on the other hand, they express themselves not so complimentary in regard to other churches.

For instance, there are a great many who do not think any better of the Quakers than they ought to think; who call them "idealists," "dreamers," "visionists," and say that there is nothing to them;

who employ all sorts of disparaging phrases in speaking of them. Then there are a great many who do not believe in Unitarians and Universalists, nor in their belief. And then there are a great many who have a most salutary and edifying horror of the Roman Catholics. And then there are a great many who think that High Calvinists—the old, stern, blue-jacket Calvinists—are intolerable. Oh! they can scarcely suppress the horror which they have of them. So things are parceled out; and everybody has some religion that he hates.

Now, perhaps, a man brought up in that spirit drifts out into life. He has come to feel that there is nothing like being a good Presbyterian, as his father was before him. He goes into the church; and he has an idea that he may be an elder before he dies. He has heard a great deal about Quakers; but he has had no opinion of them at all. He goes into the war, and is made sick by exposure; and finally, when he is helpless, and has no one to care for him, he is found by some Quakers, and taken into their little community, and nursed and nourished with great simplicity and great gentleness. He sees no ostentation among them, but great truthfulness, and unbounded patience of love. As soon as he is able to go about, he vists one house and another, and finds them everywhere the same. No effort is made to proselyte him. No controversy is gotten up to convince him that he is wrong and that they are right. But he sees how they live; how devout they are; how pure-minded they are; how serene they are; how truly spiritual they are. And by the time he gets well, and goes back to his father's house, his feelings are so changed that it will not do for anybody to rail against the Quakers in his presence. Although he was brought up to think the least of them, yet, after being among them, and seeing their good works, he glorifies his Father which is in heaven, from the light of their example and piety.

What has taken place? Has he read Fox's works? Has he studied and acquainted himself with the Quaker system of philosophy? Nothing of the sort. But he has observed their life; and he says, "Those people are Christians, or else there are not any Christians."

Another man has been brought up so that he is tremendously orthodox. He would no more go into a Unitarian church than he would go into a theater. He feels about that very much as many people feel about coming to Plymouth Church. But in the course of providence he is thrown into a Unitarian family. He is a very severe man in his disposition, and he finds himself met by people of the most singular sweetness—people that are utterly unfierce; and he feels rebuked in their presence. Some day he utters such speeches

that the very children look at him with horror; and he finds himself a publican and a heathen in this Unitarian family. And his ideas begin to change. After he has been with there a month, he finds great want of moral tone in himself. He is very orthodox. His doctrines come together like irons in a machine; and men are ground to powder by controversy who get into his mill. But when he sees how these people manage their temper and feelings; when he beholds their forbearance, and generosity, and gentleness, and kindness, he cannot resist his convictions any longer, and he says, "I do not know how to account for it; but one thing I do believe, that somehow or other such Unitarians will be saved." He cannot get it through his theology, but he has got it through his heart.

Well, what is it? He has seen good works—*Christian* good works. He has seen real Christian dispositions working themselves out in real Christian actions. And the sight of these is more than controversy or reasoning can be.

Now, if there is anything that we feel free to do, and justified in doing, and expect to be praised for doing, it is reviling the Catholics. We are doubtless all in sympathy here. We do not believe in a Pope, nor in Cardinals, nor in Bishops, nor in Priests, nor in their principles. We are all at unity in this respect. It is not troublesome to get people together in hating. It is only in loving that it is hard to make people one.

So our poor boys felt who went South; and after desperate conflicts, some of them, wounded, and more dead than alive, were taken from the battle-fields to hospitals where they were attended by "Sisters of Charity." Here were these women, acting under the supervision of their priests, performing good works night and day, without weariness, without a self-thought apparently, kind as kindness itself, and giving new light and luster and interpretation to the divine patience, by giving new models of it. And the youth who started for the army a great Protestant, who went into the war feeling that all Catholics would be damned, for a long time resists the influence of the gentleness and kindness which he receives at the hands of these women; but by the time he is well enough to go home, he is ready to fight for that part of the Catholic Church, at least, called "Sisters of Charity."

What has won that boy over to this feeling toward them? They have not read him any argument in favor of their religion. They have not placed in his hand any book setting forth the principles of their faith. They have not shown any improper desire to win him. They have not resorted to any offensive method of producing an impression on his imagination or heart or understanding. But he will

tell you that if there are any Christians in this world, *they* are Christians. What has done it? The sight of their good works has done it.

Here is a stern, granite-faced old Calvinist. All the neighborborhood know how hard he is. The man that stumbles on him shall be broken; and the man on whom he stumbles shall be ground to dust. He is one of the hardest of hard men. Yet, by and by there will come round an exigency in which you will come under the shadow of that man's wing, and he will protect you; and then all those qualities which have seemed so hard to you, will seem as the walls of a house when a storm is raging. The stronger they are, and the harder they are, the better you like it when once you get inside. Only let his feeling come out in the shape of good actions, and you will say, "Oh! after all, when you come to know the man clear down inside, there is a great deal that is good and beautiful in him. Pity that he does not show it more, that other folks might see it." You have found it out inside.

My brethren, you never saw a man that had a feeling or quality of truth, of justice, or of love, and gave expression to it, that the sight of it did not produce the conviction in those that looked upon it that he was a Christian man. You never saw a man living better than you lived, that it was not brought to your mind more powerfully than a sermon could have brought it, "I lack! I lack!" And this is the meaning of the Saviour, when he says:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

A single thought more. One says, "Suppose I have no right feelings? You say that good works are to flow from right feelings; that right feelings are to be wrought out into right actions; but suppose I have no such feelings, what am I to do? Must I perform the right actions anyhow?" Yes, certainly. Right actions performed without right feelings are imperfect, and are less influential than they would be if they were accompanied by right feelings; yet they have a mission in life, and do an important work when thrown into the mixture of human experience.

As, on the one hand, feeling ought to take on some form of conduct; so, on the other hand, it is a law that conduct tends to work back and produce the feeling from which it ought to spring. Let me illustrate.

If a man feels generously, let him do something generous. Let the emotion be followed by its appropriate action; and the tendency of the action will be to go on and repeat itself. But a person says, "I do not feel generously." Then, I say, perform the action without

the feeling, and the performance will tend to excite the feeling. If you act pityingly, though you do not feel pity, you will find that a tendency to pity will be excited in you. If you act benevolently, you will find that benevolence itself will be quickened in you. If you act justly, conscience will begin to be stirred. The way to educate moral feeling is to iterate and reiterate the effects which that feeling would produce if were excited in the bosom.

So then, if a man says, "I am not a Christian, and I do not feel bound to perform Christian duties," he has an erroneous idea of how to become a Christian. One way is to *begin to act like a Christian.* Thousands there are in this congregation who are standing wistfully hoping that they may ere long be Christians; yea, who mean to enter upon an active Christian life; but who do not feel that they are wound up yet. They are saying in themselves, "My intentions are good; my purpose is right; I mean to enter upon a Christian life, and do my duty as a Christian; but I do not yet see my way clear to begin." My advice to you is, Begin where you are, and do the things which lie next to you that a Christian man should. For that is one of the roads to Christian life. Do not fail to act like a Christian, even if you cannot feel like one. Do not wait for feeling. If you do not feel, then act, that you may feel. Do the things that you would do if you were a Christian. There is nothing that we ought to do as Christians that we ought not to do anyhow. You are bound to fill up your life with a better manhood. This is obligatory on all men and under all circumstances. So, whatever is right and just and proper, that do. Do not wait for any technical experience. Do not wait to be carried by this or that emotion to any particular point. Whatever is true, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, do to-day, do at once, and do continuously. And pray God that to these outward actions there may be added the experience of those inward emotions which shall make conduct spontaneous and bountiful.

Not to dwell longer on this subject, though it is full of other applications, I repeat the words with which I began:

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Show us that thou dost not shut out from thy thoughts any that thou hast created; that thine eye is open to those that are afar off as well as to those that are near; and that thy heart is toward those that are needy, even though their transgression hath made them needy.

Thou art the God of all help. Thou lovest truth; thou lovest righteousness; and thou hast ordained that they shall stand; and upon them, as upon foundations, thou wilt build thy kingdom, and perfect it to the uttermost. And thou wilt turn out of it whatsoever offends or maketh a lie. Yet in thy great work thou wilt bring forth strength out of weakness, joy out of sorrow, purity out of imperfection. Thou wilt teach men patiently, and with infinite long-suffering. Thou wilt not cast away thine heritage, nor destroy those who have come short of obedience. Thou art a God of mercy; thou art a God of grace and goodness; and it is this goodness of thine that leads to repentance. But for thy patience with us, but for thy paternal forbearance we had despaired long ago, and, with face turned, gone away forever from thee; but thy mercy hath held us; thy goodness hath encouraged us; and we have been the recipients of thy pardon. Thou hast spared in times past, and art still sparing; and we desire to give thanks to thee together, to-day, for all the mercies which we have had; for all the judgments which have been averted; for all the worthy plans which thou hast inspired us to form, and which have come to pass; and for all the escapes which thou hast granted us, delivering us out of snares and troubles. We desire to thank thee for the whole memory of thy grace to us from the time that we were born, through our childhood, and all the way of our life upward. More are the things that are forgotten than are the things that are remembered. More are those things that are unknown and unnoticed than are those that ever come to our knowledge. When the books of God shall be opened to us in the life to come, how wondrous will be that path of providence through which thou wilt have led us, O all-guiding Father! How strange it will be that we have known so little of things which were so eminent, and in which was our very immortality! We rejoice to believe that we are not guided alone by the wisdom which we possess, and that it is not our skill only that is our defense. Higher than our thought move the eternal circuits of thy thought; and wider abroad than our arm is the omnipotence of thine hand; and all around us is God, loving, thinking, guiding, defending. In thee we live, and move, and have our being. And we rejoice that in the plenitude of thy nature is the certitude of our salvation. We are saved, not because we are good, but because thou art good; not because we are perfect, but because thy mercy overflows the bounds and measures of perfection. And thou dost take to the perfection of thine own power the imperfect. And so we have hope of everlasting life.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt accept our thanks for all the sweetness and blessedness which we have had in the knowledge and hope of Jesus Christ. For the fulfillment of his promises which have been to us yea and amen, for all the seasons of prayer which we have enjoyed, for communion one with another, for the blessed fellowship of labor in the vineyard of the Lord, for all the hope and inspiration which we have had, we render thee thanks. It has not been in vain that we have served thee. It has not been in vain that we have been called by name of thee.

And now, we desire to go forward in thy work, and to bear well the yoke and the burden, and to find them, as we have found them, light and easy.

We pray that thou wilt accept, to-day, the offering of thy people, which they bring, of thoughts and feelings, and present before thee. Make thyself known to every one. May each heart that prays to thee hear itself called by name. May its most secret wishes be made known to thee. Or, if the wants of any rise inexplicable and unknown to them, do thou, O God, who seest the secret intents of the heart, discern what each one's need is; and be thou a Saviour according to their needs.

And we pray that thou wilt hear those who express their gladness and their joyfulness in thy presence to-day. Hear those who come hither in fulfillment of vows to-day, and stand among thy people to make mention of thy goodness. And hear those who desire to enter into covenant and promise with thee to-day. And hear, to-day, those that bring with them their sorrow, their trouble; those who ask release; those who request that burdens may be removed; those who entreat thee to grant that they may be delivered from temptation; those who are in the snare, and pray that they may escape as a bird escapes from the net of the fowler.

We pray for those who are troubled in the household, and for their children, and for their companions, and for their friends. O, thou that seest the thoughts of the heart! wilt thou not look upon that which we appear to be one to another, but look inward, and discern the very nature of our influence.

We pray that thou wilt bless us according to the multitude of thy tender mercies; according to the greatness of thy loving-kindness. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all for whom we should pray. Remember thy servants, everywhere, that to-day preach the gospel of Christ. May they be able to do it with purity, and with directness, and with power from on high. Be with thy servants that are assembled for worship everywhere. May their services be such as shall be acceptable to thee, and such as shall nourish thy people into all true greatness.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon all those, everywhere, to-day, whom our thoughts remember, whether they be upon the sea or on the land, at home or abroad. O Lord! we commit to thee those who are dear to us, and pray for them. And we pray for strangers in our midst, that they may, in the house of God, find their brethren and home.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt fulfill thy promises which have respect to thy Church, and which have respect to the nations of the earth. And let that day so long lingering upon the morning horizon at last break over the hills, and the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his beams. Cast down oppression. Destroy superstition. Purge ignorance out from among the nations of the earth. Lift up the race into civilization, and into purity, and into power. And bring to pass the promises of the latter-day glory.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises, evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the word of instruction delivered. Grant that we may not be carried away into incorrect thought or believing. By thy Spirit open our understanding. By thy Spirit guide our experience. By our experience, quickened by thy divine love, lead us into all truth. We pray that we may be more thoughtful of others; that we may be more benevolent; that we may

be more just; that we may be more true and pure in our intents; and that the scope and breadth of our life-labor may be more and more ample. And grant that when we shall have passed through the school and experience of this lower state, we may rise, leaving behind the inexperience of the body, into that spirit-land where, with thee for our Teacher and Companion, and with hindrances gone, we shall rejoice forever and ever in the perfection of the heavenly state.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

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